A Family Affair

BY HUGH CONWAY.

CHAPTER VIII.—CONTINUED.

It was a burning day. The sun shot down its rays fiercely on the treeless, shadeless, barren island, or so-called island. Mrs. Miller's black garments seemed scarcely suitable to such weather—her frame certainly not strong enough to toil up those cliffs of oolitic limestone which frowned down upon her. No wonder she turned to the cabstand. The two or three cabs which it boasted were rickety old machines, but the horses which were between the shafts were strong ones. Horses need be strong to earn a living in this land.

She drove a bargain after the manner of her kind, then took her seat in one of the dusty vehicles. She was driven through the little gray town which lies at the foot of, and stretches a long way up the hill. The horse toiled up the steep street;; on and on until the occupant of the cab looked down on the tops of the houses which she had just passed. Then a turn, and a bit of level ground, another turn and a steep hill; so on and on in a zigzag course until the table-land which lies at the top of Portland Island was somehow reached, an event which must have been grateful alike to the horse and the occupant of the cab, supposing the latter only possessed of nerves of ordinary strength and therefore apt to rebel against being drawn up hills as steep as the side of a house.

Some time before the cab reached the top of the cliffs it had at intervals passed gangs of men working by the roadside. At a distance these men looked little different from ordinary navvies, but a closer inspection showed that the garments of most of them consisted of a dark yellow jersey covered by a sleeveless jacket of light fustian or some such material. This jacket, moreover, was stamped in various places with the government broad arrow. Every man wore gaiters and a curiously-shaped cap, under which no hair was visible. Occasionally one might be seen who moved with a certain stiffness in his gait, as if something which he would willingly have dispensed with restrained the natural elasticity of his lower limbs. Here and there the monotony of the attire was broken by the appearance of some who were dressed in blue instead of yellow; but taken altogether the dress, if comfortable and enduring, was scarcely one which a man being a free agent would choose for himself.

The gangs which Mrs. Miller passed on the roadside were for the most part engaged in handing lumps of turf from man to man. They performed these duties in a listless perfunctory manner, although standing on the hill side above every band of workers were two men in long dark coats with the shining buttons of authority, and each of these men held a rifle with fixed bayonet.

Further away in the quarries could be seen many other such gangs, digging, delving, hauling, wheeling barrows, and performing other operations needful for extracting the famed Portland stone from the ground.

After passing various sentries, and driving for some distance along the level ground, Mrs. Miller's cab reached a beautiful, tall, buttressed wall; skirting this it turned at right angles and very soon drew up before an imposing entrance built of gray stone, and bearing over the archway the royal arms of England. This was the entrance to Her Majesty's prison of Portland.

In front of it, across the road, stretched the governor's garden, still brilliant with flowers, and looking like a glorious oasis in the midst of a barren land. A man who in discharge of his duties has to live on the top of Portland Island, wants a garden or something of that sort. Without it the monotony of the place would drive him mad.

But Mrs. Miller did not even look at the gay beds. She dismounted, and after telling the cabman to wait for her, walked boldly through the prison gate.

She was immediately accosted by a portly, good-tempered-looking janitor, whose gold-laced cap spoke of superior standing. He ushered her into a little waiting-room just inside the gate, and asked her to state her business. Mrs. Miller's business was to see one of the convicts by name Maurice Harvey.

Now, convicts are only allowed to see their friends once in six months; so the janitor shook his head dubiously. Still, as Mrs. Miller was a most respectable-looking woman, he said he would mention the matter to the governor. He begged the lady to take a chair and then left her.

She sat for some time in the bare little waiting-room, the walls of which were decorated with notices requesting visitors to the prison not to offer the warders any money, but to deposit such donations as they wished to make in boxes which were hung against the wall for the benefit of discharged prisoners and the officers' schools respectively. After a while the good-natured janitor returned. He told Mrs. Miller that the convict had not seen a friend for many months, so upon his return from work he would be asked if he would like to see her. She must give her name.

She wrote it down; then waited patiently. By and by there was a measured tramp of many heavy feet, and she knew the convicts were returning to dinner. After the tramp had died away, a warder made his appearance and told her to follow him.

It was but a step. He opened a door in the rear of the waiting-room and Mrs. Miller found herself in a place which could suggest nothing else than den at a zoological garden one side of the room being formed of iron bars about six inches apart. And opposite was a similar den with its front turned toward it and entered by another door, and between the two was a space, a narrow den, entered by another door and containing a stool.

Presently the door of the middle den opened and a warder entered and seated himself upon the stool; then the furthest door opened, and one of the blue-habited convicts walked up to the bars, and gave his visitor a nod of careless recognition.

As a rule when a female friend is permitted to see a convict there is weeping and wailing. Hands are stretched out through the bars across the open space, and if the two persons are of ordinary stature, finger-tips may just meet. This is better than nothing. Time was when no open space divided the friends; they could kiss and almost embrace through one set of bars. But it was found that the visitor's kiss often transferred a half-sovereign from her mouth to the convict's. A kindly action, no doubt, but one which when discovered led the man into trouble, knocked off good-conduct marks, and lengthened his time of imprisonment. So now there is a space of something like five feet between the visitor and the visited.

With these two there was no weeping, no stretching out of hands. In fact, as Mrs. Miller looked at the caged creature in front of her, an expression very nearly akin to hatred settled on her strongly-marked features. Yet, in spite of his close-clipped crown, shaven cheeks, and ugly attire, the convict was by no means ill looking. His features were straight, and might even have been called refined. He was above the middle height, broad-shouldered, and healthy-looking. His teeth were good, and his hands, although rough and hardened with toil, were not the hands of one who has labored from his childhood. His eyes had a cruel, crafty look in them; but this look might have been acquired since his incarceration. Indeed Mrs. Miller had noticed the same expression in the eyes of every convict whom she had met on the road to the prison.

Mrs. Miller looked through her bars at the convict; the convict looked through his bars at Mrs. Miller; the warden between them sat on his stool sublimely indifferent, and for a while there was silence. The convict was the first to break it.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said.

"Yes, it's me," said Mrs. Miller.

"Well, what do you want? To see how I am getting on?"

He spoke quite jauntily. His visitor gazed at him scornfully.

"Oh, I'm in splendid health," he continued. "Physically, I'm twice the man I was when I came here. Regular hours, regular meals, regular work. Constitution quite set up. No chance of my dying before my term's up."

"No, I'm afraid there isn't," said Mrs. Miller with such bitterness that the impassive warden glanced at her, and wondered what manner of prisoner's friend this was.

The prisoner's face changed. He scowled at her as darkly as she had scowled at him.

"When will your time be up?" she asked sharply. "Can you tell me?" she added, turning to the warden.

"Can't say exactly," answered the warden. "He's in blug, so he's in his last year."

(To be Continued.)

WYANDOTTE CHICKENS.

How This Popular Breed of Poultry Received Its Name.

The Wyandottes are one of the most important breeds of American production. Indeed, they might be properly called our most popular breed. Prior to the year 1883 there were no Wyandottes. For a dozen years before that date, numerous fanciers in various sections of the country had been at work trying to develop some new variety that might bring them such fame and such profit as had come to those who had originated and perfected the Plymouth Rocks. So, when these new birds—the outcome of their labors—were recognized as worthy of a classification as a standard variety by the American Poultry Association, their name was born with them.

The Wyandotte Indians had formerly occupied those portions of New York and Michigan in which these fowls or their immediate progenitors, were first cultivated. They had flourished there under various names, such as Hambricks, Hambletonians, Eurekas, Excelsiors, Columbians, Seabright Cochins, Seabright Brahmas and American Seabrights. Much bitterness as to the name was manifest among the various fanciers who were urging their admission to the standard, and when the final name was proposed it was like oil upon the troubled waters, and it was accepted as a happy solution of the difficulty.—From Country Life in America.

The Billionaire Farmer.

Percentages of crop conditions and estimates of acreage mean little to all but the experts, but here are some figures of the probable value in dollars of the crops of this year, estimated so conservatively by one of the leading financial agencies that they are without doubt well within the facts.

Cotton, the staple of the South, is expected to show this year a yield of at least 12,000,000 bales, which will have a value on the plantations of over $498,000,000.

Wheat will doubtless be harvested to the extent of 654,000,000 bushels, with a value on the farms of $424,000,000, about $20,000,000 less than last year.

The oat crop is expected to be 901,000,000 bushels, with a value on the farm of $314,000,000, or fully $85,000,000 more than last year.

Barley and rye are estimated as likely to show crops of 53,000,000 bushels, and to be worth on the farm together about $80,000,000, practically the same as last year.

Taken together, these crops which are now pretty well assured, will be worth not less than $1,315,000,000 to the farmers, as compared with $1,200,000,000 last year.

The corn crop, which matures much later than the others, is naturally in some doubt. It is also the most important of all the crops. However, splendid progress has been made by it this year and the government now predicts a yield of 2,537,263,00 bushels. Figured at 2,250,000,000 bushels this crop will have a total value on the farms at the average price of the last two years up to $927,000,000.

This will bring the total value of the crops to the farmers of the land this year up to $2,243,000,000.

Two billion two hundred and forty-three million dollars—the gift of the soil to the United States this year! There may be depressions in manufactures and trade; there may be an unsettled confidence through political elections; there may be panics in Wall street through financial excesses. But as long as Mother Nature continues to pour billions yearly into the lap of the American farmer this country must go ahead in wealth and prosperity.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

The late ex-President Kruger was not an eloquent man, but he excelled at brief and pithy sayings, many of which, like the saying about waiting for the tortoise to stick out his head, have passed into the language of nations. His answer to a nephew who petitioned for a Government appointment has often been quoted: "My dear boy, I can do nothing for you. You are not clever enough for a subordnate position, and all the higher offices are filled."

Billing—"That man had a head for business."

Willing—"What does he do?"

Billing—"Sells cabbages."

Simpson—They must have insured that building for a joke.

Sampson—Why?

Simpson—It is an asbestos factory.

SOME VALUABLE VOLUMES.

Copies of Dickens' Works That Will Be Worth $1,000 Each.

The costliest books ever printed are now being published at Cambridge, Mass., the typographical work being done by the University Press plant and the binding at the Boston Bindery, in the vicinity of Harvard College. They comprise the complete works of Charles Dickens and will cost $1,000 each, reports the New York Times, of recent date. There are 130 volumes to a set, making the total cost of each subscription $130,000. Only ten sets are to be issued, however, and all have already been sold, J Pierpont Morgan and the Duke of Westminster being among those to whose libraries these expensive volumes will be added.

There is one feature of these costly volumes which makes them of unusual interest to all who have to do with the printing or collection of books. They are being printed on real parchment, such as was used four centuries ago. The permanent qualities of parchment are known and appreciated everywhere, but all efforts to do successful printing on that material in recent years have failed. Since the secret died with the printers of 400 years ago all attempts to successfully print a book on parchment have proved failures until the process was rediscovered at the University Press and a successful experiment made in the case of these rare and costly volumes.

A set of books of this character cannot be produced in a day, or a year for that matter. Although only 1,300 volumes in all are to be issued, eight years will be required to complete the work upon them.

The books will be bound in the most perfect levant, with exquisite colors inlaid in beautiful designs. Much of the ornamentation will be done in solid gold. The entire edition is hand illumined by expert American, French and Italian artists, who have used the most entrancing colors in weaving dainty and fanciful designs upon the parchment pages.

The Boston Bindery has been at work upon several other costly and attractive volumes during the past few months. Among them were the beautiful presentation copies sent by the famous ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston to King Edward and President Roosevelt, containing the history of that organization.

Another elegant volume recently turned out was the book published by Yale University and sent to the King of Portugal as an expression of the University's appreciation of a gift from the Portuguese ruler. This was a very beautiful and attractive volume which will prove an ornament to even a King's library.

One of the most interesting of the many rare books issued from this establishment was one of almost infinitesimal size, bound for a professor at Harvard College, who designed it to be a wedding present for his bride.

It is a revelation to the ordinary man to walk through this bindery and inspect the expensive books being placed in covers of costly satin and exquisite inlaid leather for men and women of wealth who love to see gorgeous and rare volumes upon the shelves of their libraries.

The owner and manager of the bindery was brought up in a circle which gave him good preparation for his life work. Norman H. White, who is yet in his early thirties, was prominent at Harvard College as a fraternity man and an amatuer actor. He was graduated in the class of '95. He has traveled extensively, and while in London discovered at the British museum the little book which Henry VIII wore in his watch charm. He had a sketch made of it, and now shows it, together with pictures of some fifty other famous books as a lantern slide.

Abolishing the Billboard Nuisance.

The war against the bill board nuisance goes on with unceasing vigor and success. Action in the matter has recently been taken in the city of Seattle, Omaha, Kansas City and Akron, O., in the direction of the mitigation or the suppression of bill board abominations. In Seattle bill boards have been ruled out of the city entirely and the superintendent of public works in Kansas City has refused to allow their erection anywhere within the city limits. Akron prohibits them within 300 feet of any school house and Omaha requires that the consent of all property owners within 200 feet of the site proposed for bill boards shall first be obtained. Let the good work go on.

THE FARM IN POLITICS.

Sons of the Soil Who Have Gone to Seats of the Mighty.

Gradually, but surely, and with never a backward step, does the farm advance. Not in the old sense is its increased importance made manifest. Statistics are wanting; but it is probable that the farm, as the birthplace of famous men, is no busier now than it was, say, fifty years ago. It acquires its heightened significance wholly from the fact that having long been the favorite birthplace, it is fast becoming the dwelling place of fame through the medium of politics.

The Hon Charles W. Fairbanks, second in command of the republican expedition, lingers mentally with fondness, no doubt, in the Big Darby country of northern Ohio; but bodily he lingers there no longer. The function of the farm in his case was its oldtime function—that of training and nourishing the youthful stalk, and sending it up, strong and straight, six feet several inches into the world. But to the Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, the Hon. Alton B. Parker, the Hon. William J. Bryan and the Hon. Thomas C. Platt the farm has a present and far from a reminiscent meaning.

From the sunny slopes of Sagamore Hill the president supplies his summer table. The hay, the Newton pippins and the red polk cattle are as much a part of Rosemount and Rosemount daily news as the judge himself. At the Fairview stock farm in Lincoln, Neb., the Hereford calf, the Angus cow, the Durham bull and the Poland-China pigs dwell together with the farmer in precious Jeffersonian simplicity. And at Highland Hill—one can almost hear the cool drip dripping of the wheels—the senior senator of the Empire state finds rest and rakes, solace and sweet peas.

Thus is the farm distinguished and uplifted. More so even than in ages past, when Cincinnatus pushed his willing plow, or when Webster tossed the incense-bearing hay.

A Shade Too Much.

"Whatever in the world is this, Maria?" asked Mr. Tompkins, stumbling over a great parcel in the hallway when he came into supper after the day's work. "Awning?" he echoed. "Awnings for what?"

"Why, for the windows, of course!" "What did you suppose they were for? returned Mrs. Tompkins, impatiently. The tool chest or the coal bin? All the big houses in the village have got 'em. The agent who came here today told me so himself, and everything about our house here is so old and commonplace"—

"But, Maria," began Mr. Tompkins, mildly, "if all the big houses have got 'em it's only because they're so new that their shade trees haven't had a chance to cut any figure yet. It's just because this house is old that the trees father planted—and now I come to think of it, Maria, it was only the the other day that you complained of the upstairs room being musty for want of more sun."

"And so I did," replied Mrs. Tompkins, with asperity. "I can't see that that's got anything to do with awnings."

"Why, awnings keep out the sun, don't they?"

"Umph!" returned Mrs. Tompkins. "If that isn't just like a man—taking everything for granted and never investigate anything on his own account! Awnings keep out the sun if you want 'em to, but they don't if you don't! The agent himself told me they roll up flat as the wall, and he fixed one on the guest room window to show just how it's done. And so it does, just as he said."

"Well then"—

"Now, it's just like you Hezekiah, to go on finding fault, but I'm just that tired of being behind the times in everything! You might about as well not have a progressive wife, for all the good it does you!"—Youth's Companion.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Thomas Davison, who is coming to Boston in the autmn to attend the triennial General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, is the eight-fifth Archbishop to bear that title and has an income of $75,000 a year.

The commands we give to the horse and our call to the cow are the same used by the prehistoric men of our race. In all probability the Arab calls to his camel in the same words now as in the days of Abraham or Noah.

Built on rocks—National banks.